

marvelled at a country where a Prime Minister from Baie Comeau could reach across the country and extend his hand to someone who came from a small town in Saskatchewan. We all celebrated Canada on the evening of June 9, 1993 and, with the help of Alexander Graham Bell, we were able to communicate our joy at this honour and responsibility.

I grew up in the village of Weirdale, Saskatchewan, just a few miles northeast of Prince Albert. That area was settled in the 1930s by those escaping the ravages of drought. We named our town after the Honourable Robert Weir, a Conservative who was elected to the Melfort constituency in 1930 and was appointed Minister of Agriculture.

I was introduced to politics at the age of 11 when I was fortunate to witness the Right Honourable John George Diefenbaker speak, while standing on a flatbed truck on Main Street, as part of an election caravan wending its way across our constituency of Prince Albert. Here was a man who would be Prime Minister. He had a profound effect on me and many others in the prairies and across this country. What he represented for many of us was the idea that by work, vision and the propagation of ideas, one could go far and do much. One could change society, and one could change one's community.

Today I would like to continue with the theme so well addressed by the Honourable Senator Ghitter. I am perhaps even more fearful with respect to some of the things Senator Ghitter talked about than he is. Our institutions are indeed under attack; we know that. The success of the Bloc is our evidence. However, the phenomenon is even more far-reaching. Political parties and those who participate in them are under extreme scrutiny. While that is healthy, it is not so when it becomes hysteria.

I would like to quote the Right Honourable Joe Clark from a speech given to the Calgary Southwest PC Association on November 12, 1992, when he spoke about this issue. He said:

Yet, those people are painted with a poison brush, because they happen to wear the label of politician.

It is not much comfort to know that this is an international phenomenon.

•(1520)

And it is not all new. Winston Churchill was despised by millions of Britons through the war, and turfed out directly afterwards. Sir John A. Macdonald, Sir Wilfrid Laurier, Lester B. Pearson, John G. Diefenbaker — people we now look back on as icons — all lost elections, all lost favour, all faced the opposition of millions.

But today, we seem to have gone beyond that, to embrace a brooding hostility that is more abiding, much deeper, more disturbing. And it is something we must both fear and fight — not simply as Progressive Conservatives, but as Canadians. If we don't, something far more serious than elections are at stake. The country is.

We know as parliamentarians that our system benefits from having strong national parties, and that they are necessary for our

particular system to operate, especially in a country as large and as diverse as ours. We also require the best of the brightest to be involved, for it is within broad-based parties that people learn the skills necessary to govern, to debate, to campaign, to raise money, to sell ideas and to compromise — to give a little to your neighbour and, as Jesse Jackson so aptly put it, to find common ground.

Totalitarian personalities find it difficult to succeed within our system. They are weeded out because they have neither the skill, the patience nor the inclination to succeed amongst people of strong, differing views. It is in narrow interest groups that the authoritarians flourish. Everyone thinks the same; people who think differently are excluded, and everyone is wrong but the group. It is happening in Canada today. We are left with one national party in the other place and two in Parliament.

Honourable senators, I want to turn my attention now to the Reform Party. The Reformers have built their momentum on some basic premises; on a foundation that used exaggerations and misinformation to take advantage of what Joe Clark described as a world-wide phenomenon. They said such things as, "The deficit is the fault of free-spending politicians who are more interested in spending on themselves than on the national interest" or "The politicians themselves are not pure of heart. Therefore, we must be governed by the people who are." This leap of logic excludes elected members from being "the people."

The Reformers talk of a more direct democracy. On February 20 on *Newsworld*, I heard Preston Manning say that even though he is against euthanasia because it is morally wrong, if his constituents wanted it, then he would support it. Honourable senators know that MPs have argued and debated this premise since 1867. Do I vote for what I think the constituency wants, even though I do not agree? Do I vote for what I think is the national interest, or for the narrow interests of the riding? I think most members vote their conscience, and when they face the electorate in the next election they defend their position, because an elected member is elected for his record through the four years, not on one particular issue over which he can be recalled, according to the Reform Party. We tell our children, "Do not succumb to peer pressure; do what is right, even if you stand alone" — but not Manning.

He stands in sharp contrast to my former member of Parliament who is now our Governor General. He was an abolitionist while 80 per cent of his riding favoured capital punishment, but the people elected him four times consecutively because he stood up for what he believed in. Now, if you are in trouble and the world is against you, surely you would want to know who would be by your side.

Frankly, the Reform Party has been getting a free ride. Like all extremist parties, they practise the politics of envy — the reason you, the voters, do not have is because others do. We have heard this before, whether it be the rich, the Jews, the multinationals; history is full of examples. Find someone to blame. The Reform Party painted politicians with the broad brush of envy, those who were there, and deftly used the propaganda tactics so exceptionally described by Hitler in *Mein Kampf* in his chapter on propaganda. The sins were opulence, sumptuous offices, gluttony practised in subsidized restaurants, vanity, barber shops turned into beauty salons and health clubs; all were mentioned —